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Cache	128 K pipeline	256 K pipeline	256 K pipeline	128 K pipeline
Hard drive	3.2 GB	3.1 GB	3.2 GB	3.1 GB
CD ROM drive	24X	16X	16X	24X
Sound card	SoundBlaster 16	16-bit	SoundBlaster 16	SoundBlaster 16
Modem	56K	33.6K	56K	56K
Monitor	15"	15"	15"	15"
Video Card	SV VR42 2MB	2MB	1MB	2MB ATi
Office 97 SE	included	included	included	included
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Letters

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Programs, UBC Continuing Studies.

Wegen Johnson replies, Due to space limitations, this did not run in the online edition. In the Computer Player! August issue, but we included this letter because we felt it would be of interest to B.C. readers. To check out the original article, point your Web browser to <http://www.bccomputer.com>.

Has a glitch

I was reading "Handling Windows 95 glitches" by Lynn Geller (September issue). It says that Windows 95 does not run sound files after an unattended install. This depends on what version of Windows 95 you have. If you have Windows 95 version 4, this is true. If you have Windows 95 version 4, because this version uses FAT 32, it automatically runs sound.

Al McIntosh, via the Internet

Opel

We apologize to our September cover girl, Zippy Lenné, for spelling her name incorrectly in the September issue. ♦

# Out with the new, in with the old



Street Buzz

While our large high technology firm announced recently it would give down to local operations, under-estimated & would expand into B.C. Advanced Grains Computer Technology Ltd. announced last month it would be moving the bulk of its operations south of the border in an attempt to stem mounting losses. The red ink comes after two failed local acquisition attempts, one for Vancouver-based Neri Technologies and the other for Hong Kong-based Yantai International Holdings. And in this a hefty lawsuit settlement of nearly \$500,000 with U.S.-based Rural Power. Golin Audio is a first copyright infringement case. The company will replace its staff of up to 150 jobs, who will stay on to continue with the

company's research and development.

At Advanced Grains all but exits the local high-tech scene. Hewlett-Packard Canada (HP) announced recently it will close its Edmonton facility and consolidate operations in Montreal and Vancouver. Of the 50 employees to be laid off, about half will come from HP's Edmonton facility was responsible for developing testing and measuring technology for testbed and telecommunications applications. HP is known as a heavy recruiter of recent university graduates and already has close connections with Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia.

KBC hits the information highway

In an effort to combat new Canadian tour race updates and reduce public awareness, the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia has launched its own Web site. The site is geared toward providing customers with detailed information on auto coverage, insurance theft, and theft devices and road safety. There's even a consumer tips section on

shopping for the safest automobile. Besides being an alternative to calling your local Australian agent, the site also includes entertaining bits of how people have tried to commit insurance fraud and been caught in the process. A comment forum also enables you to send questions or comments directly to I.C.B.C. staff for review and response. For more information, visit the site at <http://www.icbc.com>.

Mailhouse picks a loss

After Mailhouse Entertainment Inc.'s public share offering earlier this year, its issuing price for the first quarter ended in a public company—a loss of \$4.5 million in the first quarter ending in June. Just one year ago, losses were nearly \$400,000 for the same period. Mailhouse Entertainment is a leading computer software firm and producers of the popular television adventure show *Avatar*. It produces 29

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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# What's happening in SOHO

## A look at small and home office trends

BY ALAN THWINS

**G**T the times they are a-changin'—the troubador at 1969 it only be know, it only be know.

As we climb towards the next millennium, hard-driving trends in two areas are affecting us all. These areas are computers—which, in 1969, was reserved for the high forebears of science and the military, and business, which, in 1969, belonged to the big boys: the likes of Keno the books, and automobile manufacturers. What's changed? And why? And what's coming next?

Well, if we look to the business scene, there

have been lots of changes. Talk of the "mainframe industrial complex" has been replaced by talk about "mainframe systems." Mainframes (real and virtual) are still used, but their names are Microsoft and Time Warner rather than Rand or IBM. Job security is gone, pensions are up for grabs, and there's a whole generation of 20- and 30-somethings looking at a lifetime of MicJobs. Sounds kind of grim, doesn't it?

Well, there is some good news in the world of business. It's called SOHO, an acronym that covers a lot of ground. Small office/home office can mean anything from a sole (or near sole) proprietor operation running out of someone's business office to a team

of designers, programmers, and sales staff running an Internet servers business.

What's important is that the SOHO model works: only from the "mainframe" business model, new tools differently and in a whole—or near—leverage time, energy and resources in new ways.



The business business?

Here are some numbers. Not specific, but trends that hold within these numbers that can mean new business, repeat business, and an increase in the business life.

### Answer one

In the 1980s, the *Forbes* magazine, the one-word business advice given to David Hoffman's character was "platoon." In the 1990s, the answer would be "isolation."

Manufacturers, developers, resellers, and knowledge workers understand that customers are willing to pay-and pay well-for the services of someone who can customize a product or service. It's an extension of the current passion for the personal trainer: someone who knows the customer well enough to build a solution that will meet the customer's particular needs.

The logical corollary is that those who supply all "tools," whether hardware, software, or a single service, are doomed to failure.

### Answer two

Convergence is the dynamic that's running the business world. Whether it's the computer-TV hybrid, the marriage of banking and the Web, or even the uneasy alliance between Microsoft and Apple things are coming together. This means that the most-of-the-entire SOHO entrepreneur needs to possess himself or herself at least a couple of sectors and markets.

Nail to say that the big vertical markets are still there. They are, and they're growing. But moving within a single vertical market requires a depth and strength of

Continued on page 13

## Every rose has its thorn

**T**here are a lot of advantages to the SOHO (small office/home office) life, but it's not all flowers and sunshine. Quitting your job as a freelance editor, the entrepreneur's dream of "being your own boss" has a lot of pitfalls for things to consider if you find yourself contemplating taking the plunge (or being pushed into the pool).

### There's no escaping the office

Working where you live can make life seem very cramped. The boundaries of your life experience can shrink. Work can easily take over, muscle in on your "time off," and ban you into a frenzy.

It's important to try to set limits, be realistic about deadlines. Don't drive yourself into the ground. And get out of the "office" as much as you can.

### It's easy to get off

Conversely, you're also surrounded by distractions. There's no one looking over your shoulder and (perhaps) you're not getting the level of discipline that you can get when the eight-ball is in the hole.

Working at home takes discipline and perseverance in the face of danger (such as the burning need to alphabetize your CDs). Sometimes it's hard to buckle down and be productive. Once again, defined limits can help.

### Your schedule may backbite

It's great to be able to work your own hours,

but there may be consequences. Personally, I like to wake late at night (evening time is my writing time, say 6 a.m.), but keeping regular hours affects my ability to interact with others. Business and personal, not to mention my chances to sleep.

### It can get lonely

Working by yourself for long hours can be discouraging. You can feel cut off, isolated, unconnected to the ebb and flow of human relations. The office group is holy shit, too.

The Internet has created a number of avenues for SOHO workers to have events, share information, but the greatest may still find it difficult.

### Your situation can be misunderstood

As many have noted, the number of SOHO workers (voluntary or otherwise) is increasing, but there's still a lack of understanding from "traditional" working friends. Your living at home seems like an invitation for them to visit whenever they want. Your flexible schedule may encourage them to tempt you into socializing when you can't afford the time.

As well, the SOHO atmosphere can cause distractions your "traditional" working friends take for granted. "Weekend" is often a meaningless word to the "traditional" is whatever unpaid overtime happens.

In the end, many (your mileage may vary), as they say on the net, just want to know if you do take the plunge, be prepared to do some adjusting.—William A. Wood

### SOHO stats

Find some background. Here are some numbers of how the employment scene has changed in recent years.

Twenty years ago about 15 per cent of Canadians worked for nonunion levels of government. While 11 per cent of us were self-employed. Today over 15 per cent of us are self-employed, and only 14.6 per cent work for the government, according to Statistics Canada.

Andrew Jackson, senior economist with the Canadian Labour Congress, claims self-employment has increased 75 per cent of the net gain in employment between 1990 and 1993.

A 1994 national survey of Canadian home-based entrepreneurs conducted by Elizabeth Harris-publisher, *Head Office* (at home magazine) found that:

- 65 per cent of those responding were between the ages of 31 and 50.
- 72 per cent have a university education.
- 35 per cent have been in business for up to three years, and 27 per cent have been in business less than ten years.
- 77 per cent said their own desire to start their business, and only 10 per cent received money from a bank or other company.

Finally according to a Canadian Federation of Independent Business study, 48 per cent of small businesses in Canada in 1992 were operated by women. That was up from 30 per cent in 1981.

### Looking for answers

Well and good, you might say, but that's history and statistics, what about the future? What should SOHOs not when they look at











# Balancing act: Feng Shui for your work space

BY S.J. ROSS

**F**eng Shui, the 5,000-year-old Chinese practice of arranging your living space to harmoniously blend with the environment, is now being adopted by businesses as a result of a viable office environment.

"Feng Shui (pronounced 'fung shue') or 'feng shue' is practical and physical and energetic and mystical," says Blake Starni, Feng Shui consultant and teacher. It is the study of people and place. It is the Chinese art of designing harmonious environments. It is a way of setting up space to work well and feel right and out the person who is using it." In essence, Feng Shui, which literally translates as "wind" and "water," clear your desk line. "It's the art of designing a space such as an office to balance you and your work and the five elements of water, wood, fire, earth and metal. Ultimately, when the elements in an office are balanced, the room becomes a comfortable productive environment."

"People who work at home are in charge of themselves," says Starni. "They are moving themselves creating goals, setting vision, and the environment can help work that or detract from that."

## Get the balance right:

To balance the elements, Feng Shui uses a five-point grid to clearly define space as one of the essential qualities of life.

Consider the square lot:

- 1 Knowledge and education in the corner made by the entrance and left walls
- 2 Supervision, managers, employees in the middle of the left wall
- 3 Wealth in the corner made by the left and back walls
- 4 Reputation in the center of the back wall
- 5 Relationships in the corner made by the back and right walls
- 6 Creativity in the middle wall of the right wall
- 7 Helpful people, such as friends and clients, in the corner made by the entrance and right walls
- 8 Career in the corner of the entrance wall
- 9 Health and energy in the center of the room

Based on this grid, you can find and correct problem areas, and enhance the important aspects of your work.

For example, if you cannot save money and if there is a garbage can in the space that represents wealth, you can rectify this problem by moving the garbage can to a space that is less important to you.

On the other hand, since Starni, Feng Shui principles also range from placing power offices in a space filled with light, air, a pleasant feeling, and an enjoyable view, removing that practical considerations—from comfort to pleasantness—are vital for your needs. You invite your office furnishings and create a space that is not only a comfortable environment, you feel good and thus a happy, clear and successful person.

"The improvement of Feng Shui is real," says Starni. "It is very much in line with modern trends of working, looking for the money, being more aware of space. It is very much in line for people taking more responsibility for themselves and their work lives. And it is about making your environment conducive to you and your success."

modern trends of working, looking for the money, being more aware of space. It is very

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# Ergonomic excesses?

Many a manufacturer has jumped onto the ergonomic bandwagon, but their products can still be problematic, says ergonomist specialist Anna Duffy.

The *Nordiska Mouse by Human Digital*, for example, replaces the more traditional mouse with two ten-inch foot pedals. One controls the cursor, the other generates mouse clicks. While it does eliminate the risk of wrist injury, Duffy notes it does so by transferring the risk to the ankles.

Then there is the *Hogger Back Back* chair from United Industries. The back has a split, three-the-midline, stored at reducing spinal strain and encouraging second posture. But Duffy notes, "You have enough muscle in the spinal region that this has an irritating effect" and "there isn't enough support to prevent curvature in the chair to support the lumbar region of the back."

Soft wrist rests, such as the *Wrist Rest*, can be problematic too. Designed to resemble a rest, it is said to "alleviate wrist discomfort from prolonged computer mouse usage." But, according to Duffy, soft rests may encourage an extended wrist position, which compresses the carpal tunnel. This may encourage you to move the mouse with smaller muscles in the hand instead of the larger, stronger arm muscles. It may also encourage wrist deviation, which can irritate the carpal tunnel.

"We are not encouraging wrist rests," Duffy says. "We prefer wrist bracing."

On the bright side, however, the *Gentle Inserter* who developed the *Wrist Rest* says "You can strain your *Wrist Rest* and it may help to relieve some stresses." —S.J. Ross

**Contact:**  
Human Digital, tel. 800-571-9045

# Beating RSI

## Ergonomic accessories to ease the pain

BY S.J. ROSS

We love our computers. We love hugging the keys, clicking the mouse, and watching the monitor. We love computing speed and access and power. But we hate RSI [repetitive strain injury].

RSI is an umbrella term for repetitive pressure caused by repetitive motion or static loading, usually meaning an unusual posture. Carpal tunnel syndrome, for example, is an RSI that occurs when the carpal tunnel, a narrow space in the wrist containing tendons, nerves, and blood vessels, becomes irritated by repetitive lateral movements and bent wrist posture. And tendinitis (a sore muscle) is caused by static loading and overuse.

RSI also includes *Wrist* shoulders caused by a rigid posture, *eye strain* due to poor light, *back strain* resulting from poor posture, and more. And work according to the *Canadian Worker's Compensation Board*, an increase of more than 31 per cent of reported cases of carpal tunnel syndrome from 1990 to 1993. RSI is clearly a growing trouble.

What is a small office / home office (SOHO) worker to do? Combating RSI requires intelligent computer accessories and office furnishings, good posture and work habits, and frequent stretching breaks.

The two most critical ergonomic computer accessories are the keyboard and mouse. Purchase items that respect a minimum of effort, encourage adjusted posture and produce a straight wrist.

### Product picking

Three excellent choices are the *Macintosh MouseKeyboard* (\$139), the *Logitech MouseMate* (US\$45 US), and the *Congate G4-Desktop Wave Keyboard* (\$55/29).

The wave-shaped *Macintosh Keyboard* has a triangular space in the middle, positioning approximately half of the major keys on the right and half on the left to encourage comfort, natural shoulder and wrist placement. The three-button *MouseMate*, with its gently rounded shape, comfortably cradles the palm and fingers and is easy to maneuver. And the *Congate Keyboard* offers both an ergonomic wave shape and a built-in trackball—a fine-tuning device that allows you to move your cursor by moving your finger on the included and grooved mouse clicks by tapping the trackball or the mouse buttons.

Whatever accessories you choose, maintain a 90-degree elbow angle, keep your wrist straight, relaxed and not straining on any surface as you type. Hold the mouse gently and rely on the arm to move the mouse.

Now that you have your two most important ergonomic computer accessories, let's look at ergonomic computer furnishings.

According to Anna Duffy, ergonomist with *Human Factors North Inc.*, the most important SOHO ergonomic items are a minimalist chair, an adjustable keyboard and mouse surface, document holder and an glare screen.

The key feature is an office chair is adjustability. It should be height adjustable with a height and tilt adjustable back rest, and, if required, adjustable chair arms. Both *OfficeMaster* and *Harvard Medical Center* offer a range of adjustable ergonomic chairs.

### Sit comfortably

Once you have purchased your chair, position it to your keyboard at a 90-degree level and your feet on the floor. If necessary, purchase a foot clip that allows you to spread your feet up and down.

Next, you can purchase a chair that simply slides in and out from under your desk or you can purchase an adjustable chair for height and tilt rate.

While Duffy recommends a chair for people who predominantly interact with the desk because it "provides clearance for the knees," she recommends that heavy computer users use an adjustable arm wide enough to hold both keyboard and mouse.

But what if you have legs, use keyboard and mouse, operate your rotating keyboard arm is not wide enough to house your mouse?

Purchase an adjustable mouse arm and position it in front of your keyboard so you can reach without putting your shoulder while reaching for your mouse.

The *Details* line from *Steelcase* has a great selection of both keyboard and mouse arms.

If you frequently refer to documents as you type, purchase a document holder to hold documents at monitor level. Duffy recommends holders that are "height adjustable large enough to accommodate your paper and have a clip and bottom bar."

Some eyes and headaches are clear indications of eye fatigue but because your light may encourage you to sit incorrectly to avoid glare, a neck brace or neck may also indicate a lighting problem.



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screen to cut harsh light reflected on your monitor.

Duffy also recommends frequent short stretching breaks. This is conjunction with ergonomic furnishings and accessories, and maintaining a natural, relaxed posture is your best bet to avoid the risk of RSI. ★

SJ Ross, independent corporate, marketing, employee, and public-relations writer and consultant for an extensive portfolio of corporate and government clients, can be reached at [sjross@guidepost.org](mailto:sjross@guidepost.org).

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# PLANTRONICS



# Mac server hacked, new challenge issued

BY LARI LARSEN

Hackers have finally succeeded in breaking into a

World Wide Web site running on Apple's Macintosh operating system. But, say the Swedish organizers of the Crack-a-Mac challenge, it was

only because the hacker used a security hole in third-party software for remote administration, database access, and other functions.

The successful hacker will receive the 100,000 kroner (137,450) prize offered by InfoSec Information AB, based near Malmö in southern Sweden.

The hole was plugged within 24 hours. But InfoSec says, in the Mac OS world, was not breached, another \$100,000 prize is still open to anyone who can break in before the contest closes on October 15.

Hackers were unsuccessful at penetrating the site in an earlier contest organized by InfoSec. They also failed to get into Mac sites as challenges sponsored by companies in Vancouver and the United States. Both, like the first Swedish challenge, featured attacks from the free Mac operating systems.

The latest challenge featured the most sophisticated third-party server software that used Internet software developer Blue World Communications' Lasso to tie together WebCNR and FileMaker Pro. Blue World, admitting the existence of a security hole in its software, issued a patch a day after the breach. Another company, Pacific Coast, is also reported to have updated its SwiftLink site to fix a similar breach.

According to Blue World president/CEO Bill Dowerdell, "This patch, along with changes we've already been making in other Mac OS Internet products, makes the Mac OS platform to a point that is as hard for users to break in to as for users to maintain patches for Web servers."

"The existence of this hole combined with how other products handled security contributed to someone 'winning' the Crack a Mac Web site security challenge. By using an obscure and previously unknown method, a remote user was able to gain access to a highly protected password file used by another vendor's product. That product relied upon yet another product's undocumented (in its API specification) approach which protects certain files through file modification. Prior to the security patch, Lasso did not support this little used approach. By giving access to the highly protected password file, someone was clearly able to see that vendor's product to help in and out the contents of a Web page, thereby successfully cracking the Web server."

"Blue World Inc. volunteered to pay the full amount of the challenge prize (approximately US\$100,000) to the party who discovered the hole."

## Plugging the leak

Says Dowerdell, "We feel that volunteering to pay the prize money was the right thing to do no matter how many problems were involved. We also are delighted that this enabled the important competitors to quickly get back on track. The Lasso security patch Blue World provided the best for the competitors allowed them to immediately notice the competitors, now know where they exist."

"The recent Crack a Mac security breach has inspired much of our examination of obvious methods for compromising security on a Web server," Dowerdell says. "A number of products have already been identified as containing holes either serious or exactly the same in scope and effect to the flaw recently discovered and fixed in our Lasso product."

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## FIDO competition coming

**B**y the end of the year, FIDO is going to have to share its territory with the new digital PCS dog on the block: Clearnet.

Clearnet's product, MIKE, will be launched nationally later this year, according to Clearnet's regional manager for business

development, Neil Macdonald. He says competition is, as yet, possible in the Lower Mainland on the Island and in the Interior.

He declined to reveal the expected price of MIKE, but says "it will be affordable" (there's no contract required) and it is

simple to learn and use. FIDO's service is currently available in an area ranging from North Vancouver to Beach Grove, as well as in the TriCity area.

People's expansion to the rest of the Lower Mainland is anticipated; coverage at Chilliwack, Mission and Whistler is expected by April.

A FIDO handset runs between \$200 and \$350; the service costs \$20 for 400 minutes of air time per month. No contract is required.

PCS is a digital phone service that allows users to send and receive short email messages; it also offers more privacy than regular analogue cellular phone service.

—June Campbell

Web site: <http://www.fido.net>

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Power Computing will retain its name and has stated it will ship Mac OS 9.5 software completed through Dec. 31, 1997. Apple will provide ongoing Mac OS support to Power Computing customers and Power Computing will continue to provide hardware and warranty service to its customers.

Web site: <http://www.apple.ca>

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## Laptops

Continued from page 24

## AST Accanta A16

Estimated price \$4,300

The Accanta offers a 150-MHz Pentium with MMX, 16-MB RAM, 1.44-Gb hard drive, 10x CD-ROM drive, and 12.1-inch display.

Apart from the operating system, the only installed software was McAfee VirusScan. This machine can handle more home-office and modest multimedia needs. Program response time was quick and flawless. AST has aimed this model at entry-level mobile users. Floppy drive and CD-ROM drive are interchangeable and cannot be used

simultaneously. Sound quality was good, but less rich compared to other machines tested. Includes a three-year worldwide warranty.



## Compaq Armada 2300P

Price \$4,750

This machine weighs in as a relatively hefty 5.66 kg, (12.2 lb)-as power supply is built-in (yes, don't need a separate A/C adapter)-with a larger

display than many of the other machines. It has a 160-MHz Pentium processor with MMX, 32-MB RAM, 2.1-Gb hard drive, integrated 10-Mbps Digital Simultaneous Voice and Data (DSVD) modem, and 12.1-inch display. The pointing device is a trackstick. Compaq includes a "weight server" plate that'll go into the multi-bay instead of the floppy drive or optional 1x CD-ROM drive, for the times when you don't need to carry either.

This is a speedy beast, as one would

expect from a machine that can run either Windows 95 or Windows NT (yes, choose when you start up the first time). Battery life is rated at up to three hours, but in these tests, this is as usual, inferior. Standard warranty is three years.



## Dell Latitude LM

Price \$3,000

Estimated price \$4,000

The model offers you the choice at startup of running either Windows 95 or Windows for Workgroups 3.11. It is configured with a 160-MHz Pentium processor with MMX, 16-MB RAM, a 1.4-Gb hard drive, 10x CD-ROM drive, and 12.1-inch display. It offers consistently solid performance, crisp graphics, and a very comfortable keyboard. In fact, a trackpoint built inside the palmrest. Floppy drive and CD-ROM drive cannot be used simultaneously and must be swapped in the same drive bay. Standard one-year warranty.

Continued on page 25

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# When deposed leaders dream



Mac  
Rant

DAVID ROSS

In the beginning there was Steve. Not the Steve that made things. No, this is the Steve that talked about making things. And the Steve that talked about making things looked around and saw what others had made, and saw that it was good. And Steve talked. And the Steve that was born into the job whence from he was seen no more.

And the Steve that talked about making things led his chosen people through thick and thin, but, in the glory of the Steve was ended and against him was the forces of business. In a great battle was the Steve repaid and many thought him dead. But the Steve was wise. To the Steve can do he return to wait for his redemption in some time. To keep busy he played with what came next, but these were less pork and so cash would grow instead, the Steve did produce few more thousands. Many black checks that did nothing. The Steve waited.

And to keep within his solitude, the Steve was sent a stolen of toys, and so after in purchase an extension company cheap. And the Steve breathed life into those which begat a Steve about Woody and Buzz, which began manufacturing to profit. The ability about some starts with a "I" and whose location quickly is pointed out. For the Steve had learned to take focus in hope, for a new chance at redemption. Still, the Steve waited.

Finally the Steve descended from high atop the mountains. Seeing great dismay he said, "Freedom to me for I am the One, the Only, the true Steve. Those that worship me exclusively end have no other Steves before me." And the Steve turned in respect and terror and awe.

The Steve saw the signs to be said. Newton Division and proclaimed loudly, so that all throughout the Valley could hear. "This shall not sell this dream, but it is true." And plans that had been designed a year four months before were soon launched. And his first minutes, quailed in fear and looked to the Steve for succor. And Steve said "Well, well! shall resolve your statistical problems and make you work better, not harder."

"I need the money previously worked for your statistical programs to breathe life in the Newton Division. In the light to come, I shall need five hundred million dollars, filled to overflowing with Newton software as we go forward to the Great Beyond."

And before he was cast into the bottomless pit, a doubling witness said, "But, oh Great

One, the Newton Division has never made any money!"

The Steve was great with soon and he

replied, "You want have faith and a new accounting system to show profits where none was made before."

And the Steve looked and he saw Power Computing, a company making mighty fortune. **ILLUSTRATION BY PAGE 200**

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#### IBM PC 340

#### Highlights



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- 32MB L2 Cache
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM

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#### IBM PC 350

#### Highlights



- Pentium 166MHz
- 32MB L2 Cache
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM

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#### IBM ThinkPad 2200



- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
- 16MB DRAM
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#### IBM ThinkPad 2200



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# B.C. company creates interactive identity

BY JANE CAMPBELL

**A**nnMed Inc is a new specialty pharmaceutical company in Langley that launched a large print and interactive identity design project to promote corporate information to potential investors, patients, employees and collaborators.

AnnMed is a bio technology company that develops diagnostic and therapeutic applications of neural complexes and neural binding

compounds with emphasis on life threatening disease and waste treatment.

President and chief executive officer Dr. Mike Abrams, established the new business in the Lower Mainland after spending the last decade with the Philadelphia based research unit of Johnson & Johnson.

The interactive identity, developed by Vancouver's Web Pool Synchro, consists of a Web site and an interactive presentation project created in Macromedia Director 4.0 version

Design Associates developed an accompanying print brochure.

According to Web Pool project manager Emma Payne, eight people involved in the development of the entire identity project, which took three months to complete.

"They wanted to showcase their control in drug discovery and provide education about their facilities and core science

Because bio-technology companies raise dramatically in terms of their history and potential, it was necessary for us to ensure that the AnnMed look reflected these positions as well as their unique approach in drug discovery."

**Site seeing:**

AnnMed, <http://www.annmed.com>

## MacIntosh

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

from the Steve's great Macintosh "that then he bartered to the Riley Pit of 1981," he stated.

For Power Computing was abundant with laptops and Apple was forced to buy out the whole nation for US\$100 million. The Steve proclaimed throughout the valley, "let me see how my technology goes."

"Who's going to take Apple as a business partner? Who's going to sign a contract with Apple to buy a million dollars worth of Mac?" said an unbeliever before him, too, was treated into the bottomless pit. "Your faith is the most curious you," replied the Steve.

"But what of time?" asked another meeting.

"I am all powerful and I desire that time alone may use the new Macintosh OS 8.0 in its clime because it pleases me" replied the Steve.

"So? Wake up, O'!"

"Enough! Enough!"

"So, you've been having this dream again," said his wife.

"What? When, it was so vivid. It was just like a QuickTime VR movie. I shouldn't have walked the path with double arches."

"His dream" she laughed. It was going to be another long night in the Amble household. \*

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## Antara enthalls like its predecessor

BY MARC SALTZMAN



### info box

#### Deceitful in Antara

From Sierra

System requirements: 4MB DRAM or better; 36 MB RAM; 4x CD-ROM drive; 30 MB hard-drive space (30 MB recommended)

Estimated street price: \$60 pp

I distinctly remember, while waiting one of my last psychology classes at the end of my four-year stint at university, my discovery of *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* (BARK) based on Raymond O. Frost's *Between* series, the addictive role-playing game published by all my time with its rich characters and intriguing story of the kingdoms of Middlemud. Frosty how great games seem to be when you're not too much work to play them.

Computer games who keep ahead of development news may recall that ending through producing the sequel to BARK, Frost and game company Sierra separated ways. The author took his follow-up game to 7th Level and is currently working with that game manufacturer to return to Sierra, scheduled for an early 1998 release, while Sierra left they had too much time and money invested into the project to let it go, and thus *Between in Antara* (BIA) was conceived and recently released.

Fortunately—and unfortunately—BIA isn't very different from its predecessor. The good news is that BIA is a great game; any fair comparison to it should be considered commendable. The downfall is this membership, of course, is that the original game was released in early 1994 and, technologically, quite a bit has changed since then.

#### Role call

BIA is a role-playing game, divided into various chapters, with roughly a half dozen missions for each. Your party consists of two or three characters at a time, including such members as Arca Cordicane, an apprentice magician who learns he has new powers, William Exochord, charming son of one of Barm's noble families, Kadya Usher, a female archer, and Grel, an interesting specimen known as a Grel.

As with the original game, you travel with your crew from town to town from a first-person perspective, destined to go to the heart of

the Empire's crumbling dynasty. As with *Between*, Antara is played with political negotiation, assassination, war, and word games. Your

party must act out in the huge world of Antara, exploring 3D-CD-ROMs while finding treasures.

—CHRISTOPHER J. BARR

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**BY WILLIAM A. WOOD**  
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## info

### Excluded Applications

Source: *McGraw-Hill*.

System requirements: 486 DX, 200 MHz or better processor (Pentium highly recommended), 4x CD-ROM drive, 16MB VRAM graphics.

Estimated direct effect: \$m\$

for managing a budget, handling loans, training and equipping soldiers and combat vehicles, firing weapons and conducting research, and handling new technological achievements—all the while having a watchful eye for their nation.

Whatever the strands that appear on city buildings (or you shoot down a UFO), the intellectual level comes into play. Your solution must confront the clues on the ground, in either real-time or hard-boiled combat. These squad-level battles can be incredibly intense, particularly in the early stages of the game when your technology is only a bit behind that of the enemy.

## Only a matter of time

The previous X-COM incarnations were widely lambasted in their original, and many veteran players were concerned that the real-time option would ruin the feel of the game. Having used both, I'm convinced that no one will ever use the real-time system again. Given the high level of command over the pace of the real-time option (including pauses), it is by far the most flexible and most accurate of the two choices.

Also, it makes you a lot less what I see as the only failing in X-COM: Apocalypse seems to be a heretic, the son of the "apocalypse" (your soldiers and the aliens). I found it harder to get attached to my troops, and I didn't find the aliens remotely as frightening as I did with the previous games, because both are simply too small. The smaller scale also makes the lighter tone chameleonic, less worrying although it is no less satisfying (what an alien grenade goes off in the middle of your troop).

continued on page 501



## Artica

Continued from page 36

and tacking provides, honing magic skills, and battling against a slew of "indomitable" as an

## character game.

Once again, as with EBC, the view for combat shifts to an isometric, isopaganal grid screen, employing turn-based battles between your

party and the enemy. This is probably one of the least and most improved features in BGA, and both novice players or players of the original game will adapt very quickly.

Although Sierra claims that as the first RPG in which high-end NVIDIA graphics, the appearance honestly doesn't seem any better than the first game (you can see for yourself), since the complete *Reverend in Rapture* is available for free at [www.sierra.com/other/actual/revrdr.html](http://www.sierra.com/other/actual/revrdr.html), *Pranks* are a splurge. The majority of creative features are a mostly known or speculated guess, and the 3D engine itself seems to drag along at a snail's pace, especially considering how far apart everything is in *Artica*.

Not all is unadaptable, though. The player's interface is well-designed and intuitive; the skill and spell systems are better than those of the original, and the auto-map and conversation script functions are designed and implemented effectively.

## Tough call

These are the kind of games where I sit on the fence whether or not I can justify a \$60 pay check to the reader. All in all, BGA is a large, non-linear game with over 100 hours of role-playing, embedded in a well-conceived story. The combat model is challenging and interesting, which is good, since you will run into many conflicts between such foes. If graphics and computerized voice acting are very important to you, however, stay clear of this game.

In short, if you were a leg fan of *Reverend in Rapture* and simply can't wait until *First* is out, then go ahead, then pick up BGA, as long as your time and money are on your side. ♦

## ACOM

Continued from page 37

Otherwise, I really loved this game. It is a fun race against speed to X-COM, but there from there the story was, at least in terms of mission goals, the research one, and overall complexity. This strategic theme is much more subtle than the other X-COMs is, and the other planets, and the combat missions don't drag on for as long. Clonus got downright boring in times with the alone, huge antebellum faces—especially at the last alien had a tendency to look.

The alien themselves are an interesting variety of foes, with some truly nasty surprises. They simply refuse to fight fair, and every time you develop new technology they reveal a new weapon (more devastating than ever, naturally).

## Fun as hell

The detail of both the city and the combat maps is really amazing, and the "Blanco Halls," factor into both of the vehicles, behavior, and equipment is quite cool. The very-covered, intense, engine style of the alien and their equipment is quite a contrast, and adds a nice creep factor.

And once you turn the tide of the alien invasion, and begin to investigate the mysterious dimension that is the "stranded" home, the effects really start!

X-COM Apocalypse has few difficulty settings, with a different one for each setting, some replayability. As a result, the game offers hundreds of hours of play on any level, you don't really get your money's worth—a welcome change from the economic trend in most modern games. ♦

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lication, that means new hardware and soft-  
ware or upgrades to your existing hardware  
and software.

And while many of us feel tyrannized by the  
urge to buy, here comes another little devil:  
many of us are not fulfilling our duty to buy  
new products on schedule. For example,  
recent studies have shown there are an esti-  
mated 50 million users of Windows 3.1. By  
these accounts, 50 percent of home users  
and as many as 90 percent of business users  
continue to use that operating environment,  
which dates back to 1990. On the face of  
things, users are still running Win 3.1 which  
dates back two years today!

Despite renewed efforts by software pub-  
lishers to come out with 32-bit and/or 64-bit  
operating systems, a large majority of users  
are running something other than the  
latest version of these key software  
environments when, as in the case of Win-  
dows, they can upgrade for less. Millions  
of copies of Road Perfect's i and Lotus's 1-  
2-3 release 3.1 DOS software from the 1980s  
are still in use.

**Now come!**  
In many cases, users would need to make  
major investments in hardware to make use  
of the latest software. How many of you have  
evaluated a new software product Windows  
95 in a game perhaps, only to discover that  
it's a lot of fun in your existing hardware, it's  
technically slower than what it replaced? Have  
you purchased a larger hard drive, added  
RAM, perhaps replaced your entire com-  
puter system in order to better run your  
new software? What was the real-world use of  
the 32-bit software package?

In other users' cases are following the dog-  
ma of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." There  
have been suggestions that 90 percent of us  
are so percent of the features in today's  
advanced word processors and spreadsheets,  
but most of the features added to new releases  
seem to fall into that "have often used"  
category. (Initially, however, most users also  
avoid attempts to sell them simpler word  
processors of use term but to use a full-  
featured word processor, for example, rather than  
a simpler product like OpenOffice or  
Microsoft Works, even though the Works  
product would probably meet all our needs,  
is cheaper to purchase, and require less  
computer hardware.)

Many users simply aren't interested in  
changing, having made the big, expensive  
jump in getting a computer in the first place  
and then learning to use the software. They  
don't see much need to do it all over again  
when there's something new and different  
they want to do, but can't with their current  
setup.

A couple of teachers I know have bought  
their first computers about five years ago.  
Each got what was a major system for 1991:  
a 386/333 with a MB of RAM, a 200 MB  
hard drive, and Microsoft Word 2.0. And that  
hardware and software package looks as good  
today as it did the day they bought it, even  
though its generations from the state of the  
art. Only the selective call of the Internet is  
leading one of them to consider getting  
something new.

Still, even though there are millions of  
computer users moving (or not) in upgrade  
then, even though it's not all that new, users  
are not enough of us to get them into the  
market for less than the newer, more full-  
featured, to keep the software and hardware cre-  
ators relatively happy. (And to keep the body  
moving [their latest offerings].)

Not for everyone in the middle. As a  
reviewer, companies often send me copies of  
their latest and greatest. But after writing the  
review, I often find myself taking a off my  
computer, and going back to the older prod-  
uct that meets my needs and that I'm familiar  
with. The checked out the latest generation of  
word processors, but looked up a generic  
file. I'm writing this using Microsoft Word 95,  
but the newest version of Word 97 is Word  
Perfect. That older version includes features I  
like: Windows 95 long file names, and eval-  
uate spell-checking. For example, without the  
added help of the newer generation.

The stock is even older versions of some  
products, for example Lotus Organizer 3.0,  
which dates back to 1993 and fits on a single  
floppy disk. It still organizes my  
appointments and phone numbers in a sim-  
ple schedule interface. Later versions  
added networking and group work features  
I don't need and add to times when disk  
space. The third edition produces calendars  
in minutes, but the 1993 product is good  
enough for me. \*

**Now about you?** Don't the urge to buy "latest  
and greatest" let me know at [alex@technostore.com](mailto:alex@technostore.com)





# Internet Explorer for OS/2? Not likely



OS/2  
Ready

David Huxford

During the summer, what appeared to be warm waters at Microsoft's Internet Explorer for OS/2 and a Windows 95 emulator for OS/2 were circulating the Internet. Gossip and rumors were flying fast and furious as to why the pictures had to be taken, or why they could be real. Now that all Microsoft computers will be running Internet Explorer, could OS/2 be next in line in Microsoft's scheme to speed Netscape as the most popular Internet browser?

A close examination of the screen shots revealed many inconsistencies, such as two active title bars and status lines with blurry text implied. Based on that, plus unofficial news from Microsoft and IBM that the general consensus is the Internet (sneezing), it is most likely that these screenshots are fake. Some

jokers with too much time on their hands created these still, nothing like some good rumors to draw attention in OS/2 and here we go on our lives.

Interesting story about OS/2 users want to take a better copy of Internet Explorer? If they updated it more frequently, but Netscape was with Navigator for OS/2, it'd be interesting.

## New Netscape

Spreading all which, as expected, IBM has announced a new licensing agreement with Netscape Communications for the Netscape Navigator 4.0 browser for OS/2. This updated Web browser features support for Dynamic HTML, JavaScript, and even per cent pure Java. Unfortunately, no release date has been announced, but I'm guessing we should be able to get our hands on at least a beta copy later this fall.

Also, if you are an IBM Assistant, yes, you might want to check out the latest beta of the OS/2 Assistant (also known as the Assistant/OS/2 Client application) (file name: TCP002702).

## Java for the people?

IBM has released the early version of their new Visual Age for Java package for all to try. IBM claims that with this package, the average user can create a fully working Java applet in less than 30 seconds! Well, I've got some good land in Florida for sale. 2.98, if you are interested in programming in Java, it can't hurt to download this package from <http://www.ibm.com/ibm.com/java/>.

## Feeling the Rapids?

As part of their continuing customer support, IBM has decided to make all OS/2 Rapids public (well, that many thanks were for now not as well). As I write this, Rapid 3.0 for Warp 4 and Rapid 3.0 for Warp 3 are both available from <http://ibm.com/ibm.com>.

So far, word on the Internet is fairly positive. One possible problem for Rapid 3.0 for Warp 4 users is that IBM has supporting support it now available by default. If you install this, it can no longer boot your machine (which means your PC controller card does not support bus mastering), add the parameter "IO=0" (IBM 3.0) (IBM) to your

BASEDEV=IBM3004.ASD file in your CMOS file.

The good thing about my machine and new installed IPX of course, I could not load OS/2 until I replaced my IBM3004.ASD file with a backup copy (this has been warned). One of the reportedly new IBM information in a file, which should add IBM is a big happy one of hardware device driver.

## Gaining outlook good

A couple of new games are in the testing phase and should be shipping this fall. Beyond the Abyss is a fast paced mode game (only in the Space Invaders style) besides destroying many ships, you must also shoot handily weapons to destroy for more to buy new weapons, add their shields, and were powerful generators. Download it here from <http://ibm.com/ibm.com>.

Simultaneous Systems has announced a full-featured game. It's called the Internet of their new game Enterprise. Your goal in this real time multi-player game is world domination through

continued on page 66

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# Tell your computer where to go

BY JACQUES SURVEYER

And desperately seek something to run up

all those extra CPU cycles that are going to be available with the new Pentium P7 and P6 chips. And 3D virtual reality gaming is

just not going to do the trick. Yikes—an industry that has thrived on product changes roughly keeping pace with Moore's

Law (CPU speed doubling every 18 months for the same price) is suddenly running out of things to do.

Well, Intel should thank Dragon, IBM, and Microsoft for sticking to their pioneering work on voice-dictation and speech-recognition systems. Dictation speech systems (where you speak with a dictation queue between you and a continuous dictation system (no pauses required) are rapidly appearing on the market; they are going from good to very good, and (cautious sigh

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of relief from Intel) they are CPU cycles for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

For example, IBM's dictation speech recognition program Simply Speaking Gold, requires 36 to 32 MB of memory and at least a Pentium 90 processor. Continuous speech recognition program IBM Dragon's Dictate NaturallySpeaking requires a Pentium 166 MHz processor with 32 to 64 MB of RAM. And for both systems, the more processing power you throw at them, the better they perform. Now there are not too many CPU cycles.

Conversely, the other half of the Windowsopoly: the boys from Redmond, Washington. Their speech recognition's name has come on. But Microsoft's seized the Internet by about two years, so we'll let you decide if it is about to make another overnight blip.

#### The case for voice dictation

Last year, we reviewed IBM's VoiceType 3, a dictation speech recognition program with most of the same features as Simply Speaking Gold, but not quite the same speed and accuracy, which was priced at \$990. That, which included no special speech hardware, was a headbanger in itself. Now continuous speech is roughly the same accuracy (one error out of 30 words) is available from Dragon Dictate for \$495. And IBM's Simply Speaking Gold has a slew of new features: such as non-speech, expanded non-vocabulary and extended macro setup; plus does menu look-ups MS Word. Its price is \$145. The price of more dictation is rapidly dropping. And the improvements in accuracy and reliability are steadily increasing. My VoiceType 3 accuracy leveled out at about

—JACQUES SURVEYER

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## Voice Recognition

Continued from page 46

from errors every 30 words dictated at about 40 to 45 words per minute. Given that my best typing rate is about 25 to 30 words per minute with about seven errors for every 30 words typed, this was a distinct improvement. So I was an early adopter of voice dictation.

There is another advantage to using voice, though. Look at my eyes and hands as I sit to write—looking through papers as I'm talking with others (thus swatch as my help), moving disks, even moving about (my car seat helps here). Let me tell you, it has transformed writing from being a chore to a pleasure again.

So what does Simply Speaking Gold buy me? The ability to have my writing read back to me while I poke around the menu. Distinctly faster typing—about 30 words per minute—so roughly the same error rate. The ability to voice-control my computer with DOS and Windows commands.

## Enter the Dragon

Given that IBM will have a continuous speech program out in mid-October called ViaVoice talking for about \$150, I was somewhat reluctant to consider Dragon Dictate NaturallySpeaking for \$495. My natural Dragon Dictate prods me into serious dictation (there, it's NaturallySpeaking name) and the accuracy and speed are even better than Simply Speaking Gold. I am averaging between 50 and 60 words per minute with errors steadily dropping from three to every 20 words dictated to two errors in 20. This is great.

I achieve these better results to three factors. First, the microphone that comes with Dragon Dictate is better—8.5 in. and comfortably, clean my associate with more noise to spare and has a luxury powered amplifier. Let me tell you, the better the microphone, the faster and more accurate your speech dictation.

Second, Dragon provides three ways for its system to learn your voice. First, there is the training (IBM calls it enrollment). The second time is roughly the same—about 45 minutes of easy reading for both Dragon and IBM. The Dragon allows you to come as strong later and I have taken another 45 minutes to get Dragon better trained. Also, unlike IBM, I can train Dragon for specific words it consistently makes errors on—i.e., "bold" instead of "old," for some strange reason.

Finally, Dragon includes a vocabulary builder program. From the program is a directory with lists concerning topics you see that you might dictate and it updates up its dictionaries and vocabulary list.

Now, of course, Dragon will claim it is all due to superior speech algorithms, and so on—but we accurately avoid the appearance of ViaVoice from IBM and the next

known customer speech program (due in early 1993) now that the company has merged with Dragon speech/dictation specialist Lucent/At&T. In the meantime,

you can talk to your computer with greater speed and accuracy than you type to your computer. It's not "REAL speech," yet, but prospects are getting better by the year. ♦

Joseph Surayer is a consultant and photographer; you can "talk" to him at [help@home.berkeley.net](mailto:help@home.berkeley.net) or by e-mail.

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#### Handheld H/Ps

Continued from page 34

included is ROM) plus Proton Word, Proton Excel, and several productivity applications. Unique to the system is a backup and restore

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systems with competing units. They make synchronizing with a desktop computer a painless exercise—just plug the 128LX module cradle and let the software do its work. Then press a button to pop the unit free for mobile operations.

The 128LX was worth the wait. ♦

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**Windows NT is a Mustell® Desktop Quick Reference for System Administrators**  
Author: **Mike Pezza**  
Publisher: **O'Reilly & Associates**  
ISBN: **1-56592-232-4**  
Price: **\$28.95**

**D**isaster strikes! It starts with Windows NT is practically non-existent. The specs usually guarantee Windows NT Resource Kit events of three full volumes. Thus, you either go on information, or have to pay a chunk of money and waste through next year's issue of paper to find the data you need to administer your NT system. What's a busy system administrator to do? In getting a handy time volume published by O'Reilly & Associates, *Windows NT is a Mustell®*. A member of the highly acclaimed "Mustell®" series, this little book packs more referenced information into its 350-odd pages than many manuals squeeze into several times that many.

In seven chapters and several appendices, author Eric Pezza provides instructions on how to perform both common and uncommon tasks on Windows NT servers or workstations. The book is directed at users of Windows NT 4.0, and includes full menu trees and command descriptions.

It's designed as a quick reference, so you won't find extensive tutorials, but there are enough examples to guide you through most tasks, and some background information that illuminates the more confusing functions. Pezza is a networking specialist, so his discussions of these aspects of NT are especially useful.

The Chapter 7, *Disaster Avoidance*, is particularly informative, since it describes all sorts of things that are not intuitive to the casual user, such as the idiosyncrasies of browsing on an NT network. And, as well as a general, general Index, there's a "Task Index" that tells you what task and doesn't only tell you to perform specific functions.

This book isn't the only NT reference you should own—it won't mean to be. But as a starting point that tells you in the right direction, *Windows NT is a Mustell®* can't be lost. —Lynn Swiner

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Most of the 24 hours titles are priced at \$29.95, while the other titles, which suggest a Week, 10 Days, or 31 Days to teach yourself the topic, range anywhere from \$34.95 to \$49.95. That appears to vary depending on the difficulty of the subject matter and includes the cost of a CD-ROM.

Overviews and detailed tables of contents help the reader stay on top of what's coming up. The appendices provide some good up-to-date information, such as sources, summaries, or quick references, and indices. A glossary in each book would have been helpful, even though technical words are explained in the text throughout the books.

One of my favorites in the series is *Teach Yourself Great Web Design in a Week*. I admire it because it predicts what it preaches. The book itself is well designed with a powerful use of color, consistent text and graphic placement, and effective messages. The result is a series of fast design, along with explanations of what makes each example "good."

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## BY LEE LESTER

A beta version of MacLynx, a product one-  
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 through Speech Manager. This program was  
 developed by the University of Kansas, and the

Now, for helping those with keyboarding difficulties, the emphasis is more on speech-to-text with IBM among the leaders in recently released Simply Speaking and Simply Speaking Gold are proclaimed as IBM's enhanced speech solution for people who'd rather talk than type. They enable Windows 95 and NT users to decrease "excessive" work-

There is even help for users of portable computers: iCalogs is a low-voiced aid for Newton users. For Calmori enlarges the canvas for PowerBook users. Also for Mac users.

Few things can really overcome a disability that, alas, the lot of the handicapped is and is being made much easier through the number and variety of computer aids now available, much of it is free, or inexpensive. ★

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